

Sherlock, Wm

A
S E R M O N
Preach'd before the
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A T
WHITE-HALL,
February the XIIth, 1691.

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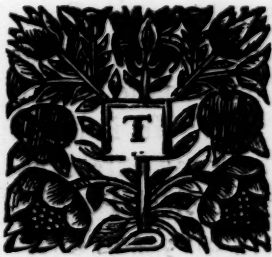
Preached before

H E R M A J E S T Y

At WHITE-HALL, Febr. 12. 169¹/₂.

IV. M A T T. 1.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil.



THE Temptation of our Saviour, after his fasting Forty Days, is a very proper Subject for our Meditation at this time; and suggests so many useful observations, that I shall not waste any time in a needless Preface; but shall 1. Consider in general, what concerns his Temptation; and 2. Explain the Nature of those particular

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Temptations wherewith the Devil assaulted him.

1. In general, Concerning our Saviour's being tempted by the Devil: Now to tempt, is to make a Tryal and Experiment; and when the Devil tempts, it is to try, if he can persuade, or seduce us from the Fear, and Worship, and Obedience of God.

1. Now in the first place it is very observable, that Christ himself, when he became Man, was tempted of the Devil; and there is no greater mystery in this, than that he was liable to hunger and cold, and had all the innocent Appetites, Inclinations, Infirmities of Human nature; that is, That he was a true and real Man. The Ancients generally conclude, that the Devil did not know at this time, how great a Person our Saviour was, even the Eternal Son of God; for it is hardly credible, that had he known this, he would have made so vain and hopeless an attempt on him: It is likely enough, he thought him to be some extraordinary person; He knew by the Ancient Prophecies, that the *Messias* was to appear; and knew from the Prophet *Daniel*, that the time for his coming was accomplished; nay, it is probable, he knew all the circumstances of his Birth, and heard

heard that testimony God gave him at his Baptism, *This is my beloved Son*; but he saw he was a Man, though an extraordinary Man; and might not know that he was any thing more; and having formerly foiled our first Parents in Paradise, in the State of innocence, hoped for the like success again.

Now if Christ himself was tempted by the Devil, none of us must hope to escape; tempted we shall be, and therefore must take care to stand upon our guard, and to fortify our Minds against all temptations.

And this encouragement we have from the example of our Saviour, that to be tempted is no Sin, unless we yield to a temptation; for He was tempted as we are, yet without sin; and we cannot imagine, had it been a sin to be tempted, that God would have permitted the Devil to have tempted our Saviour; which may ease the fears of some Melancholly Christians, who are afflicted with evil and tempting thoughts which their Souls abhor; for whatever the cause of such thoughts be, whether a frightened and disturbed imagination, or the suggestion of wicked Spirits, they can no more defile the Soul, which abhors and rejects them with grief and indignation, than they can
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the Paper , on which they are writ.

Nay, hence we learn, that God many times exercises those with the greatest and most difficult Tryals and Temptations, who are most dear to him. He had no sooner proclaimed Christ his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased, but he leads him by the Spirit into the Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil.

This Life is a State of Tryal and Probation; and Temptations, though they create some trouble and difficulty to good men, yet do them no hurt. If good Men Conquer, Temptations do but exercise, encrease, and confirm their Graces, and make them great and illustrious examples to the World, glorify the Divine Power in the Victories and Triumphs of his Servants, over the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; give them a secure hope in God, and a transporting sense of his Love, and prepare great rewards for them in the next Life. And if they happen in any particular encounter to be overcome, as St. Peter himself was, when he denied his Master; yet they rise again with glory, and the sense of their sin, and the shame of a defeat, fills them with sorrow, indignation, self-revenge, gives them new spirit, vigour, activity, resolution, makes them more patient of hardships and sufferings,

ferings, more unwearied in doing good, more humble and modest, and more perfectly resigned to the Will of God, to dispose of them and their Services to his own Glory, as he pleases.

God does not train up those whom he Loves, and whom he prepares for Glory, in ease and softness; *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*: And the more difficult Temptations he exposes us to, the greater honour he does us; the more glorious will our Triumphs, the richer and brighter will our Crowns be. Let us then behold our Saviour in the Wilderness, separated from human conversation, and all the comforts of Life, in the midst of wild Beasts and tempting Spirits, and not think, that God uses us hardly, if at any time he lets loose the Tempter upon us, and gives him power over all we have, as he did in the Case of *Job*, to afflict us in our Relations, our Bodies, our Estates, good Names, or whatever gives us the sharpest and keenest sense of suffering; and is the most difficult exercise of our Faith.

2. Let us consider the time, when our Saviour was tempted, *viz.* immediately after his Baptism, *being full of the Holy Ghost*, 4. Luke. 1.

1. As soon as our Saviour was baptized, he was led by the Spirit into the Wilderness. For *Then* in my Text relates to the time of his Baptism; and St. *Luke* tells us, this was done in his return from *Jordan*, where he was baptized by *John*.

By this Religious Rite, our Saviour had devoted himself to the immediate service of God in the Salvation of Mankind, and was inaugurated into his Prophetick Office, by that Testimony which was given to him by a Voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*; and this was the Critical time, both for the Devil to tempt, and for our Saviour to baffle all his temptations, and to triumph over him.

Could the Devil have conquered our Saviour in this first assault, there had been an end of this Glorious design of mans Salvation, when he had enslaved and captivated the Saviour himself; and therefore he began as early with the second *Adam*, as he did with the first, though not with the like success. Had our first Parents resisted the first temptation, we had been happy for ever; but they yielded and brought death upon themselves and their Posterity; but the seed of the Woman, whom God had promised, should break the Serpents Head, who *was made manifest*

manifest to destroy the works, the Kingdom and the Power of the Devil, by God's order and appointment, first encounters him in his own person, resists his most furious assaults, makes him retreat with shame and despair, as foreseeing his own destiny, and the final destruction of his Kingdom. As the old Serpent seduced our first Parents in Paradise, and brought sin and misery, and death into the world, so it was very fitting that the Saviour of Mankind should give the first proof of his Divine Power in conquering the Tempter.

This gives us great encouragement to fight under Christ's Banners against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; for the Captain of our Salvation has already conquered, and if we are not wanting to our selves, we shall be more than Conquerors through Christ who strengthens us.

He knows what the power of temptations is, and what measures of Grace are necessary to resist them; and if we do not forsake him, he will not forsake us. He has conquered himself, and knows how to conquer; and if we faithfully adhere to him, we shall conquer too.

Nay, in case we should some time be conquered, this has made him a merciful and compassionate High Priest, being in all things tempted like

as we are : He knows the weakness of humane nature, and the power and subtilty of the Tempter, and prays for us, as he did for St. Peter, *That our faith fail not* ; that if we fall, we may rise again by Repentance : And this is a mighty Consolation, *That if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*, who is not only a Propitiation for our Sins, but was tempted also, as we are.

2ly. St. Luke observes, that our Saviour was *full of the Holy Ghost*, (which he received without measure at his Baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended like a Dove, and rested on him) before he was led by the Spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.

For Human Nature (and it was the Human Nature of Christ on which the Holy Ghost descended) cannot resist such powerful Assaults without Divine Assistances. And the Example of our Saviour assures us, that God will not expose us to any Temptations, without giving us proportionable measures of Grace to resist them : That if we are at any time conquered, it is not for want of power, but for want of will to conquer : that is, the fault is wholly our own, and we cannot blame God for it.

I doubt, there are few men in the World, but the

the Devil (had he the full power of tempting) could find out some Temptations too big for them; but the Divine Goodness is seen, as well in restraining the power of the Devil, that we shall not be tempted above what we are able to bear, as by the strengthening our minds by the internal Assistances of his Grace; and therefore our Saviour has taught us to pray, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, from the wicked One, which does not signify, that we may never be tempted, which is impossible, while we live in Bodies of Flesh and Blood, and are compassed with all the Flattering Objects of Flesh and Sense; but that God would not give us up into the power of the Devil, to be tempted above what we are able.

Some of the Ancients observe from this Story, That when we devote and consecrate ourselves to God, we must expect to be tempted as our Saviour was: As for bad men, who are the Slaves and Vassals of the Devil, he cannot so properly be said to tempt, as to govern them; for *he is the Spirit that worketh in the Children of disobedience*: but when men desert his Service, he is very busie to recover his Slaves again; but then our comfort and security too, is, That when:

when we give up our selves to the Service of God, he takes us into his protection; the wicked One cannot touch us without his leave, and he always proportions our Trials to our Strength.

3^{dly}, Consider the Place of our Saviour's Temptation: *He was led by the Spirit into the Wilderness*, where there were no tempting Objects, but yet there the tempting Spirit found him.

Some men think, that the surest way to get rid of Temptations, is to get out of the World; to withdraw themselves from Human Conversation; or to make a shew of doing it, without doing it; as if the Devil could not follow them into a Desert, or a Cell. While we live in Bodies of Flesh and Blood, we may be tempted where-ever we are: If we mortify our Sensual Appetites, and our love to this World, we may live very innocently in the World; if we do not, we can never get rid of the World, but where-ever we go, we carry it in our hearts.

Do these men imagine, they can never be tempted to lust, unless they daily see and converse with beautiful Women? or that they cannot love the World without living in a Court, and enjoying

joying all the ease and luxury of a plentiful Fortune? or that it is not possible to despise the World with as much haughtiness and vanity of mind, as any Man has, who most admires it? That a Monk can't be as proud as an Emperor, and glory as much in a sullen Retirement, in Voluntary Austerities, in an Affected Poverty, in a Vain Opinion of extraordinary Sanctity, as any Man can do in Wealth and Power? Whence came all those Superstitions, which have corrupted both the Faith and Worship of Christianity, and done more mischief to the Church and Religion, than all the looseness of a Secular Life, but from Desarts and the Cells of Monks and Hermites? Which proves that the Devil has his Temptations for the Wilderness, as well as for the Court; for the most Religious Devotees, and Melancholly Enthusiasts, as well as for the Men of this World; and those the most dangerous Temptations too; which as experience tells us, open a back-door for Pride and Ambition, and Secular Power, and a general corruption of Manners to enter into the Church, and into the Lives of Christians: And therefore we must guard our selves against the Tempter as well in our greatest solitudes and retirements from
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the World, as in a croud of business. We must have a care of the temptations of Devotion, and Mortification, of Fastings and Penances, of a sullen discontent at this World, as well as of the temptations of a busie Life, and of an easie and prosperous Fortune.

4thly, I observe, That Christ *was led by the Spirit into the Wilderness*, to be tempted of the Devil; that is, It was God's appointment, not his own voluntary choice. And this Teaches us manfully to resist Temptations, when the Providence of God, and the unavoidable circumstances of our Condition bring us into Temptations, but not presumptuously to thrust our selves into them.

There is always danger in Temptations, especially when we rashly venture upon them. *Let not him that putteth on his Armour, boast, as he that putteth it off*, is true in our Spiritual Warfare. We have seen great Men conquered, even St. Peter himself; and therefore *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall*, and not unnecessarily venture too near a Precipice, where he may be in danger of falling.

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Our Saviour has taught us to pray, that God would not lead us into Temptation, as I observed before; much less then ought we to lead our selves into Temptation. We may easily presume too far upon the Strength of our Faith, our Courage, our Resolution, as St. Peter did, who had he been more diffident of himself, had kept out of the High-Priest's Hall, and escaped the Temptation, which he could not resist.

We daily see, that Men who presume upon the Strength of their Constitution, and use their Bodies ill, destroy their Health, and shorten their Lives, while Men who feel their own weak and crazy Temper, live on with Care to a good Old Age; and thus it is with respect to the Mind, as well as to the Body: Presumption will destroy those, whom Fear and Caution will secure; and therefore, *let us not be high-minded, but fear.*

There are a great many ways, whereby Men expose themselves to Temptation, and tempt even the Tempter; some of which are very obvious: As to keep Ill Company, whose Conversation is a daily Temptation: Sloth and Idleness, which betrays Men to any Wickedness, which offers itself: For it is an uneasie thing to have nothing to do, and that itself is a Tem-

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temptation,

There are a great many ways

ptation, and the Devil never wants Business to employ such Men in ; and I know nothing worse than this, but when Men choose such Business, as is nothing else but Idleness and Vanity, or can only minister to their own, or to other Mens Lusts.

But there are other ways, whereby Men thrust themselves into Temptations, without considering what they do. I might name many, but shall content myself with some few at present, which are least observed, and which prove Snares to good Men ; as for instance : To impose upon our selves constant Tasks of Religion, that we will Read and Pray so much, and so often every Day, and observe voluntary Fasts, and abstain from such innocent Diversions, &c. which Men commonly resolve in some great Heats and Fits of Devotion, which they fancy will continue in the same fervour, but never do ; and then these Tasks grow very uneasie, as every thing of Religion does, when it grows a Task ; and then they degenerate into dulness and formality, and then Men either leave them off, and with that are tempted to leave off Religion itself ; or they are so very cold, that they fancy themselves spiritually dead, and fall into Melancholly, into Desertions, into Despair itself.

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It is a dangerous thing for Men by rash and arbitrary Vows, to tie themselves up from doing that, which otherwise they might very innocently do, and which they will be strongly tempted to do, when they have vowed not to do it. The Guides of Souls know, that this is no imaginary Case, but what they so often meet with, and see such ill effects of, that it is very fit to warn Men of the snare. Were there no other reason against the Monkish Vows of Celibacy, Poverty, and Obedience, I should think this sufficient, that considered only as perpetual Vows, they are a dangerous State of Temptation ; and for my own part, I would never advise any Man to make a perpetual Vow to do, or not to do any thing, which it is not perpetually his Duty to do, or not to do.

Thus to marry with Persons of a disagreeable Age, or a disagreeable Humour, or a contrary Religion, is to put our selves into a state of Temptation ; but such particular Instances would be endless, and therefore I forbear

If God lead us into Temptation, he will give us sufficient strength to resist, if we improve his Grace ; if we lead our selves into Temptation, and God leave us to the power and sub-

tilty of the Tempter, the sin and the folly is our own.

5thly, I observe by what means our Saviour conquered the Devil's Temptations, and that was by the Authority, and by the Word of God: *It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone. It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* These are such Answers, as would admit of no Reply; for the Authority of God can never be answered.

And thus we must conquer also, if ever we will conquer, by a firm Faith in God, and Belief of his Word: Faith is our Shield, and the Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit, and we have no other sure Defence against all Temptations.

This ruined our first Parents in Paradise, when their Reason and Natural Powers, were in their greatest Vigour, Perfection, and Integrity, that instead of insisting on God's Authority, they ventured to reason the Case with the Tempter. Set aside the Authority of God, and the Devil will quickly out-wit, and out-reason us; he is skilled in all the Arts of Deceit, and Me-

Methods of Perswasions, and without God's Authority, our Courage, our Resolution, our Honour, our Reason itself, even all the Rants and triumphant Speculations of Philosophy, will fail us in the Day of Trial : to Tempt, is either to deceive, or to persuade, and there is no other secure defence against either, but the Authority, and the Word of God. The wisest Reasoner may be imposed on by so artificial a Tempter ; but God can neither deceive, nor be deceived, and then while we believe God, and have regard to his Commands, we cannot be deceived neither : And what is able to resist all the Terrours and Flatteries of the World, and the Flesh, but the Authority of that God, who is our Maker, and our Judge ? What insignificant Names are Vertue and Vice, how weak and feeble is the sense of Decency and Honour, and the Dignity of Human Nature, and of a Life of Reason (after we have read or writ so many Volumes about it) when we feel the soft Charms of Pleasure, and our Eyes are filled with visible Glories ? Who would not part with a fine Thought or two, with some pretty Notions of Moral Beauty, and Intellectual Pleasures, for a Happiness which may be seen and felt ? But the Authority of *G O D*, the
firm

firm belief of his Promises and Threatnings, the hopes and fears of another World, are beyond all other Perswasions, unless any thing can perswade a Man to be eternally miserable.

This may suffice to be spoke in General, concerning our Saviours Temptation; we come now to consider,

II. The particular Temptation, wherewith our Saviour was Assaulted, and they are Three.

1. The First was to relieve his Hunger, after his long fasting by working a Miracle: *And when the Tempter came to him, he said, if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

This was a very artificial Temptation, which it may be, none but Christ himself would have been aware of: For what hurt was it, for the Son of God to work a Miracle? What hurt was it for a Man, who was Hungry to relieve his Hunger? For here was no Temptation to excess, but to satisfy the necessities of Nature: What hurt was it for him, who afterwards fed so many Thousands by Miracles, in this great Distress, to have wrought a Miracle to satisfy his own Hunger? This was very Plausible, and looked like very charitable Advice, but yet there was a secret Snare in it.

1st, For this was made a Trial, whether he were

were the Son of God or not, *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread*: Now had he complied with this, it had argued a distrust of his Relation to God, and of the Love of his Father; and this was a Temptation to Sin. Thus the Tempter dealt with our first Parents, made them jealous of God's good Intentions towards them, and by that Tempted them to Disobedience. *The Serpent said unto the Woman, ye shall not surely die. For God knoweth, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.* That is, God envies your Happiness, and therefore has forbid you to Eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Thus the Devil suggested to our Saviour, that he had great reason to Question, whether he were the Son of God, because he was destitute of all the Comforts and Supports of Life, and after forty Days Fasting, had nothing in the Wilderness to Eat, unless he would turn Stones into Bread.

And though this part of the Temptation our Saviour takes no notice of in his Answer, but scorns it; yet we find it makes a very powerful Impression upon other Men, who are apt to measure God's Love or Hatred by
present

present things ; when they are Prosperous, they conclude they are the Favorites of Heaven ; when they are Afflicted and meet with cross Events, then God is angry with them and has forsaken them : And though this argues such a stupid Ignorance of Christianity , that one would think, it could be no Temptation to a Christian, yet it is too Notorious, that three parts of the Melancholy, the Desertions, nay despair of many Christians , is owing to no other Cause: they think their Condition safe for the next World, while they are Prosperous in this, but as soon as the World begins to Frown they are irrecoverably Damned ; but would such men consider, that our Saviour himself wanted Bread in the Wilderness, and had no place, whereon to lay his Head ; it would cure these Desertions if there be no greater Guilt, which a strait Fortune awakens the sense of, which I doubt is too often the Case.

2dly, There was another Snare in this, to perswade our Saviour, to supply the necessities of Nature by extraordinary means, without the immediate Direction and Command of God ; for this had been a distrust of God's Care and Providence, to have relieved his own wants by preternatural and uncommanded Methods :

thods: And therefore to this he Answers, *It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* That is, Bread indeed is the ordinary Provision God has made for the support of Mans Life, but when these ordinary and natural Provisions fail, he has other ways to support Life, as he fed the *Israelites* with Manna and Quails in the Wilderness, and gave them Drink out of a Rock, but then we must patiently and securely expect by what means God will provide for us, and till the *word proceed out of his mouth*, till we have some particular Command and Direction for it, we must take no Extraordinary, Uncommanded, much less Forbidden ways, to preserve our Lives: for this is want of trust in God, or want of Submission to his Will. Extream want and necessity is almost an irresistible Temptation to human Nature, to distrust the ordinary Provisions of Providence, and to provide for our selves by what means we can; and to justify what we do by such necessities: it requires a great degree of Faith and Trust in God, when we have no Prospect of ordinary Succors, patiently to expect God's Provision, without going out of Gods way: But thus our Saviour was

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tempted, and has taught us how to conquer this Temptation, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God*: If Bread fail, we must expect by what other means God will supply our Wants, and not transgress those Laws God hath prescribed us, how desperate soever our Condition seem to be.

2dly, The next Temptation is in the other extreme, to presume so far upon his Interest in God's Favour and Protection, as to make dangerous and vain-glorious Experiments of God's care: *He set him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thy self down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time, thou shouldst dash thy foot against the stone.*

When the Tempter perceived, that Christ wholly relied on the Directions and Authority of Scripture, he inforces his Temptation with Scripture too, misunderstood and misapplied. And these are the most dangerous Temptations of all, which impose upon Men with a shew of Religion, as our late Experience of a wild Enthusiastic Age will tell us; when nothing so
bad

bad could be thought of, but some Men had Scripture-Examples, or Precepts, or Prophecies, or Parables, to justifie it; and therefore we must be aware of this, as well as of all the other Arts and Stratagems of the Tempter.

In answer to this our Saviour proves, that this Text could not mean, that God would command his Angels to bear him up in their hands, if he should fling himself from the Pinnacle of the Temple, because we are expressly forbid, to make such Experiments of God's Protection, as this: *It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

To tempt is to try, and to tempt God is to try what he will, or can do for us, beyond his Promise, and beyond the ordinary Methods of his Providence; especially when we either murmur against God, for not answering our unreasonable demands, or presume upon his favour to do that, which he has forbid us to do, or expect his Protection and Blessing, when we put our selves out of the ordinary Protection of his Providence: it were easie, had I time to give instances, of all these ways of tempting God; the Temptation of our Saviour concerns the last I mentioned, out of a vain-glorious hu-

mour, and a presumption of God's peculiar favour to us, voluntarily without any reasonable pretence, much less necessity, to thrust ourselves into apparent and unavoidable Dangers, and expect God should save us by Miracles: for this is what our Saviour was tempted to, to fling himself down from the Pinnacle of the Temple, in a presumptuous confidence of God's care of him, that he would command his Angels to bear him up in their hands.

This looks like Faith in *God*, a plerophory of Hope, and full assurance of his Love, but indeed is Vanity, Pride, Insolence, Presumption, and a tempting of *God*. It is such an Affront and Indignity, as wise Men will not bear from their best Friends, when they impose upon them, not to do them a real kindness, but to gratifie their vanity and humour in such Demands, as a wise Man cannot honourably grant.

And yet there is a more dangerous and fatal Presumption then this, when men have such a strong Imagination of their being the Sons, the Chosen and Elect People of God, that they think they cannot do any thing to forfeit God's Love: they may make more bold with God's
Laws

Laws then other Men, for *God sees no sin in his people*; nay indeed, that it is no Sin to advance themselves, and the Cause they have Espoused, which they call the Glory of God, by extraordinary means, that is, by transgressing all the known and ordinary Rules of Justice and Charity.

These are dangerous Temptations, and we have seen the miserable Effects of them, and therefore let no man think, that he is so great a favorite of Heaven, as to have God at his beck to save him by Miracles, when he wilfully exposes himself to such Dangers, as nothing but Miracles can Deliver him from; much less to think, that God will alter the nature of Good and Evil for his sake; that he will dispense with his Laws, (Laws which are as Eternal and Unchangeable as his own Nature) when ever such vain Enthusiasts pretend to serve themselves, and his Glory by the breach of them, *It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

3. These two Temptations were managed with great Art to deceive, the third is open and bare-faced. The Devil in express words tempts him to Idolatry, with the Promise of all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them;

them ; which he had drawn a beautiful Land-
 skip of, and shew'd him from a high Moun-
 tain : *All these things will I give thee, if thou*
wilt fall down and worship me : Or as St. Luke
 relates it : *All this power will I give thee, and*
the glory of them ; for it is delivered unto me,
and to whomsoever I will, I give it. Which in
 some sense was true at that time ; not that the
 Devil had the Supreme and Absolute disposal
 of Kingdoms, for St. Paul assures us, that
 all the Powers even of the Pagan World,

13 Rom. were of God and ordained by God. But yet he
 I. was at that time the God of this World, and
 had a more visible Kingdom than God himself.
 The true Worshippers of God were at that
 time chiefly confined to *Judea*, a very little spot
 of Earth, but all the Power and Glory of the
 World was in the hands of Idolaters, who
 Worshipped the Devil and wicked Spirits:
 And the force of the Argument is, as if he had
 said to our Saviour, You call your self the Son
 of God, and Worship him, but will God do
 that for you, which I can and will do, if you
 Worship me : You your self see, that he has
 no Kingdom but *Judea* to bestow on you, and
 that also is at present in the Hands of my
 Worshippers ; but what is that to all the King-

doms of the World, which are at my disposal, and which you see your self are mine and under my Government. But our Saviour without disputing the value of this World, or what Power the Devil had in the disposal of it, chides away the Tempter with Indignation, be gone Satan, *For it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* But tho' Christ refused this proffer, his pretended Vicar has taken it, and revived the old Pagan Idolatry for the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them.

This is the prevailing Temptation to this day, to corrupt Religion, the Faith and Worship of God for some temporal Advantages: too many Men think that the best Religion, which will best serve a secular Interest; And we have reason to think, that too many do this, and know what they do; that their furious Zeal for a false Religion is not all Ignorance and Mistake, but an undissembled Love of this World: For can we think, that the Devil never tempted any Man but Christ, knowingly and willingly to renounce the true Religion, and the true Worship of God for this World? No doubt he does, and very often prevails too; and these knowing Idolaters who make a down-
right

right bargain to Worship the Devil for the Kingdoms of the World and the Glory of them, are those who abuse the Ignorant and Credulous with a false and hypocritical Zeal.

But let us remember, that we must *Worship the Lord our God, and him only must we serve*: Let us remember what our Saviour tells us, *What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Let us remember, that the end of Religion is to please God, to Glorifie him, to be like him, and to enjoy him for ever, and this will give us a secure Victory over the World and the Devil, Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever, Amen.

F I N I S.